

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Session Plan
Holiday Blues

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens, GA, *by David B Jarrett, MD, December 2022*

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“ ‘tis a season of homecomings, when we gather around common tables and forge uncommon memories – some of them blessings, some of them otherwise, home being what it is.

Let us gather now in a common circle and forge uncommon connections, uncommon memories, through this circle in which we are at home.” — Circle Ministry First Parish UU Cohasset, MA

Check-in/ Sharing: This is a time to mention briefly any major issue or event on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: Holiday Blues

by HealthPartners

The holidays are a stereotypically cheerful time when everyone is meant to be surrounded by loved ones and enjoying every second of the season. But when someone isn't feeling happy or cheerful, or if they can't be near their loved ones, the apparent cheer surrounding them can make them feel even more down, and often alone with their feelings – which deepens symptoms of depression.

The holiday months are spent differently by everyone, and personal circumstances play a big part in how and why someone may experience stress or sadness. But here are some of the most common causes for depression during the holidays.

- Generalized stress (this may be due to responsibilities, more social interactions, and less time to relax and recharge)
- Physical and mental fatigue
- Pressures of perceived obligations (may be related to travel, meal planning, gift giving and more)
- Financial stress
- High expectations – often caused by the exaggerated portrayal of the holidays on TV, in movies, the media and on social media
- Travel stress
- Stressful family gatherings
- First holiday season after the passing of someone you love
- Loneliness
- Disappointment over not being able to see family and friends
- Pandemic isolation and worries about gathering safely

Quotes:

1. Christmas is a time when you get homesick...even when you're home.
Carol Nelson
2. Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful. Norman Vincent Peale
3. You stopped by my house first, Mister Blues and blues, you didn't do me much good. You should have heard me beggin. Blues, don't murder me. Buddy Guy
4. Anyone who believes that men are the equal of women has never seen a man trying to wrap a Christmas present. Unknown

5. Remember that the best solution for holiday blues is to do something special for someone else. Unknown
6. Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people once a year.
Victor Borge
7. Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves.
Eric Sevareid
8. Depression is something that doesn't just go away. It's just... there and you deal with it. It's like... malaria or something. Maybe it won't be cured, but you've got to take the medication you're prescribed, and you stay out of situations that are going to trigger it.
Adam Ant

Do you find any of these quotes meaningful to you?

Questions for Discussion:

1. How do you feel about the Holidays especially Christmas? Is it a time for joy and celebration or an annoying drag or something in-between or else?
2. Do you or anyone close to you generally get really depressed around the holidays?
3. What can you do to make the holidays brighter for you or your loved ones? Do you actually do any of these things?
4. What do you like about this time of the year?
5. Do you ever have to pretend to be happy this time of the year?
6. Do the shorter days and gloomy weather get you down?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions followed by sharing)

Wrapping Up:

How did you like this topic and session? What did you wish was different?

Future meetings & Other Business: Who will lead and how shall we meet?

Closing Words:

May whatever joy you find in this holiday season stay with you for all the year and what comfort you find in our being together stay with at least until we meet again. And for all who find this a time to celebrate: Merry Christmas!!